



---

## **PRESS RELEASE**

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 3, 2003

For Information Contact Public Affairs

**HARRIET BERNICK**

Telephone: (602) 514-7736

Pager: (602) 356-0004

# **WHITERIVER MAN SENTENCED TO 135 MONTHS IN PRISON FOR SECOND DEGREE MURDER**

**PHOENIX, ARIZONA** –The United States Attorneys Office for the District of Arizona, announced that on June 2, 2003, Danski Li Tortice, D.O.B. 1/17/83, of Whiteriver, Az., was sentenced to 135 months of imprisonment for the murder of Duwayne Johnson, also of Whiteriver, Arizona, by United States District Judge Paul G. Rosenblatt. Tortice's sentence was ordered to run consecutively to his 12 years state sentence for two residential burglaries committed in Snowflake Az. Tortice was on escape status at the time of the murder from burglary felony charges in Navajo County. The defendant will have to serve a minimum of 85% of his sentence before his eligible for release from federal custody. Once he is released he will have to serve a 5 year term of supervised release under the supervision of the United States Probation Office.

Tortice pled guilty to second degree murder on January 22, 2003. The facts which lead up to the murder are as follows.

(MORE)

On or about August 13, 2001, the defendant, Danski Li Tortice, a member of the White Mountain Apache Tribe, was drinking with the victim, Duwayne Johnson, also a member of the White Mountain Apache Tribe. As they drank beer, they talked about setting fires when they were younger for fun. Tortice claimed that the victim began to accuse Tortice of burning down the victim's house. The defendant denied that he had done it. They walked over to an area by the Sunrise Dance. The argument continued and the victim began to push the defendant. According to Tortice, the victim got up on a little stand and continued calling the defendant names such as "faggot."

The defendant was carrying a knife and he pulled it out of the carrying sheath. The victim continued to push and the defendant told him to stop. The victim then jumped toward the defendant with his arms out as though he was going to hit the defendant. The defendant swung the knife in the direction of the victim's chest but wound up slicing his neck. The defendant seeing that the victim was seriously hurt ran off into the mountains. Duwayne Johnson died as a result of this massive injury to his neck.

The investigation in this case was conducted by White Mountain Apache Tribal Police Department, the Fort Apache Agency of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The prosecution was handled by Vincent Q. Kirby, Assistant United States Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix, Arizona.

CASE NUMBER: CR-01-1061-PCT-PGR  
RELEASE NUMBER: 2003-102

# # #